

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 716

By Moore

A RESOLUTION commending District Chief Robert Glenn Connelly for his fifty years of service to the Nashville Fire Department.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are honored to recognize those intrepid and dedicated individuals who have dedicated their years of industry protecting the lives and property of the citizens of this State; and

WHEREAS, District Chief Robert Glenn “Bobby” Connelly is one such individual who has served as a proud firefighter with the Nashville Fire Department (NFD) for the past fifty years, one-third of the years NFD has been in existence; and

WHEREAS, on December 1, 1959, a twenty-two-year-old Bobby Connelly joined the Nashville Fire Department as a firefighter and, for the past five decades, he has defined what it means to be a brave and wholly committed firefighter; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Connelly grew up in north Nashville with his three brothers, John, Donald, and the late Herb Connelly, and his sister, Carolyn, and graduated from North High School in 1956; and

WHEREAS, following his graduation, Bobby Connelly enlisted in the United States Army, whereupon he served as a proud and valorous member of the military for two years. After he completed his basic training in Arkansas, he spent the remainder of the his term of duty stationed at Fort Lewis, Washington. During his time in Washington, he often visited his brother and sister-in-law, Herb and Joan Connelly, who live in Seattle, on the weekends; and

WHEREAS, discharged from military service in 1958, he embarked upon the short-lived careers of selling insurance and working at Avco before joining the Nashville Fire Department in December of 1959; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Connelly served as Firefighter until December 1964, when he was promoted to Assistant Engineer. He gained the positions of Engineer in November of 1966, Captain in May of 1984, Safety Officer in February of 1997, and District Chief in August of 1999; and

WHEREAS, District Chief Connelly has brought to his position a wealth of firefighting knowledge and leadership abilities, and he has led the firefighters serving under him with acumen and ability; and

WHEREAS, over the past five decades, Bobby Connelly has worked at a number of Nashville's fire stations, including Engine 13, Engine 21, Truck 21, Truck 4 (Station 17), Engine 26, Engine 12, Engine 2 (the former headquarters of the Nashville Fire Department), Battalion 21, and District 9; and

WHEREAS, since joining the Nashville Fire Department in 1959, which was then under the leadership of Fire Chief John Ragsdale and served the city under Mayor Ben West, District Chief Connelly has worked for seven mayors and nine fire chiefs and has helped to usher in a number of positive changes in the industry; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure with the fire department, Bobby Connelly has attended several fire service schools and completed his training to become an Emergency Medical Technician; and

WHEREAS, he has also overcome a great deal of adversity during his career. In 1991, Mr. Connelly was critically injured in a warehouse fire when a brick wall fell on him, breaking both of his legs. Though doctors told him he may never walk again, Bobby Connelly drew upon his great reserves of strength and determination, battled his way back to good health, and went back to fighting fires; and

WHEREAS, not even a second disastrous event, which occurred in 2007 when he fell through the floor while fighting a fire, was enough to push him away from the service he loves. After surgery and rehabilitation, Bobby Connelly, who was sixty-nine at the time, returned to firefighting after only a few months. His fortitude and strength are inspirational to the entirety of the NFD; and

WHEREAS, his years with the NFD have been marked by a number of memorable highlights, as well, including his service fighting wildfires in Florida, during which his fellow firefighters dubbed him “Captain Dinosaur” because he was in his 60s at the time. He is known to often say that “he has had a million dollars worth of fun” during his career; and

WHEREAS, a firm believer in the importance of good physical health, Mr. Connelly has remained in top physical condition throughout his life and has competed in a number of grueling physical endeavors, including completing a number of marathons and half marathons, riding a bicycle across the State of Tennessee, participating in several triathlons, competing in the World Fire and Police Games in Memphis, and running from the Virginia state line to Nashville; and

WHEREAS, District Chief Connelly has also remained active in a number of civic and community involvements throughout the years. A Thirty-Second Degree Mason, Bobby Connelly has dedicated his time and energies as a Pee-Wee baseball coach, as an assistant Little League baseball coach, as the President of the Dixie Youth League, and as a perennial mentor at Camp Phoenix, a camp sponsored by Nashville Firefighters Local 140 which hosts a number of burned children each year; and

WHEREAS, Bobby Connelly is perhaps proudest of the love and support he shares with his wife, Gail, to whom he was joined in holy matrimony in August of 1956, and he is the proud father of Mike, Cathy, and Connie, and the doting grandfather of five grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, for half of a century, Mr. Connelly has dedicated his deep expertise and wholehearted commitment as a member of the Nashville Fire Department, and it is wholly fitting that this body recognize him upon his impressive career as a firefighter; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby commend District Chief Robert Glenn Connelly for his fifty years of service as a member of the Nashville Fire Department and offer our best wishes for his continued success and happiness in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.